editor's choice

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

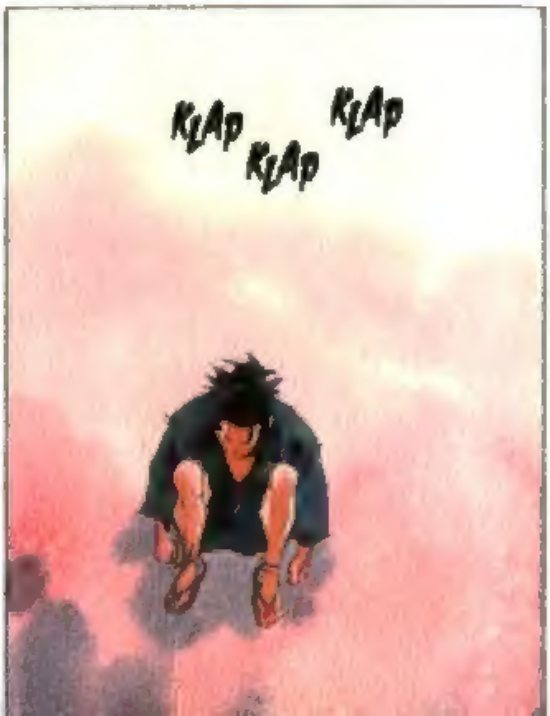
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 5

English Edition

I WON...

SHUF
SHUF


KLAP
KLAP
KLAP

Vagabond

vol. 5

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

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#41 The Assassin

...
YOU'RE FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE...?

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
I'M HERE TO CUT YOU DOWN.

I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE FIRE.
AND I DON'T KNOW WHO STARTED IT.
I SHOWED UP AT YOUR DOJO BY MYSELF.
WHY?
...

BUT IF YOU INSIST...
...I'LL TAKE YOU ON...

I KNEW IT...
HA HA HA...
HA HA HA...
YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME.
GRIN
YOU ONLY KNOW HOW TO SPEAK THROUGH YOUR SWORD.

BUT...
...I JUST THOUGHT THAT A BOUT WITH YOU MIGHT PROVE TO BE INTERESTING.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO BURNT THE SCHOOL DOWN.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT.

...BUT HE'LL BITE IF I'M NOT CAREFUL...
HIS STANCE IS TOTALLY LOOSE...
THIS GUY...
...

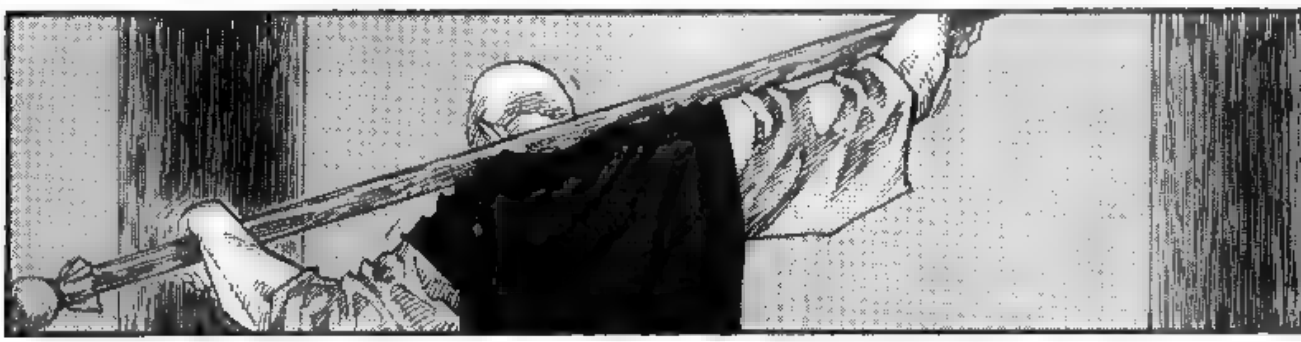
HE'LL CUT DOWN ANYONE WHO ENTERS HIS SPACE.
I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU, OF COURSE...
...AT LEAST THAT'LL BE FUN.
BUT THE PROCESS OF THE FIGHT...
KRICH

FWOOSH
HM?
FSH
WHAT A GRACELESS THRUST!

THRAK

YOU LET GO IN MID-SWING.
IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST PEOPLE.

HMPH...!!
NICE.



IMP

YAWN

...THAT'S ENOUGH TO BEAT MOST PEOPLE...
YOUR OVER-WHELMING POWER AND VIGOR...
HAH!!
FWOOH
KLAKK

TMP
TMP
TMP
!!
HEY!!
FWOOSH

THOK

THOK

!!

!!

Tp

GOOD!!
PHEW
YOU'RE ALIVE!!

URGH...
HUF...
INSHUN...

AGON!!

FWOOSH

I AM INSHUN, THE SECOND-GENERATION MASTER OF THE HŌZŌIN SPEAR TECHNIQUE.
LET *ME* TAKE YOU ON!

Vagabond

(ZING!)

SWISH

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

INSHUN...

THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN

THIS GUY IS STRONG!!

#42 Howl

SO, INSHUN...

...WHICH OF US WILL YOU FIGHT?

REPUTATION HUH...?

I'M GION TOJI.

INSHUN...

ME...

YOUR REPUTATION IS WELL-KNOWN, EVEN IN KYOTO.

OR WILL YOU FIGHT US BOTH AT THE SAME TIME?

...OR THAT NOVICE?

NOT THAT I WANT TO TEAM UP WITH HIM OR ANYTHING...

ME NEITHER.

HM...

KOFF...

THE SHAGGY ONE...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

AGON!!

WHO BEAT YOU?

URGH...

HOW'D HE DO IT?

AND THEN?

...

I SEE!

AND THEN?

THEN HE...

...HIS WOODEN SWORD FELL...

...THEN HE BARELY MANAGED TO DODGE MY ATTACK...

HE PUNCHED YOU!?

IT'S RIDICULOUS!

BUT I LIKE IT!!

I SAW IT.

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

BAM!

IMAGINE THAT! A SWORDSMAN USING HIS FIST!

HA HA!

C'MON! LET'S HAVE A MATCH!!

ME, HUH?

HUH!?

GION TŌJI!!

INSHUN!

TMP

TMP

!!

TMP

HIS NAME IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

A WILD BEAST...

WHO IS THAT, INSHUN?

I HAVE A QUESTION...

AGON!!

GULP...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, THOUGH.

ATTEND TO HIM.

AGON!!

NICE TO SEE YOU GUYS AGAIN...

...DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE AS STRONG AS HŌZŌIN IN'EI?

IF YOU'RE THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER...

I'M PROBABLY STRONGER.

THAT'S TRUE.

BUT...IT'S UNREASONABLE TO COMPARE YOURSELF TO THE MASTER...

...HE'S AN OLD MAN OVER EIGHTY YEARS OLD!

HE'S THE ONLY ONE I CONSIDER MY EQUAL.

IF YOU CAME FROM KYOTO...

...YOU MUST KNOW YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

...!!

HA HA
HA HA

HAH!

!!

!!

YOUR STYLE IS SO SIMILAR!

YOU MUST BE SEIJURO'S DISCIPLE!!

GION TOJI...!!

WE'LL FIGHT LATER.

HE DODGED MY ATTACK...?

YOU TWO AREN'T GONNA FIGHT.

HMM...

BECAUSE *I'M* GOING TO BEAT YOU.

KRICH

"THINK YOU ARE STRONG, DO YOU...?"

KHOOSH

KHOOSH

KHOOSH

"CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?"

ERUPTING, FROM THE DEPTHS OF MUSASHI'S SUBCONSCIOUS, AN INVOLUNTARY HOWL...

...AS IF TO REJECT BEING OVERWHELMED BY THE GREAT POWER OF THE OPPONENT STANDING BEFORE HIM...

YAHHHH!

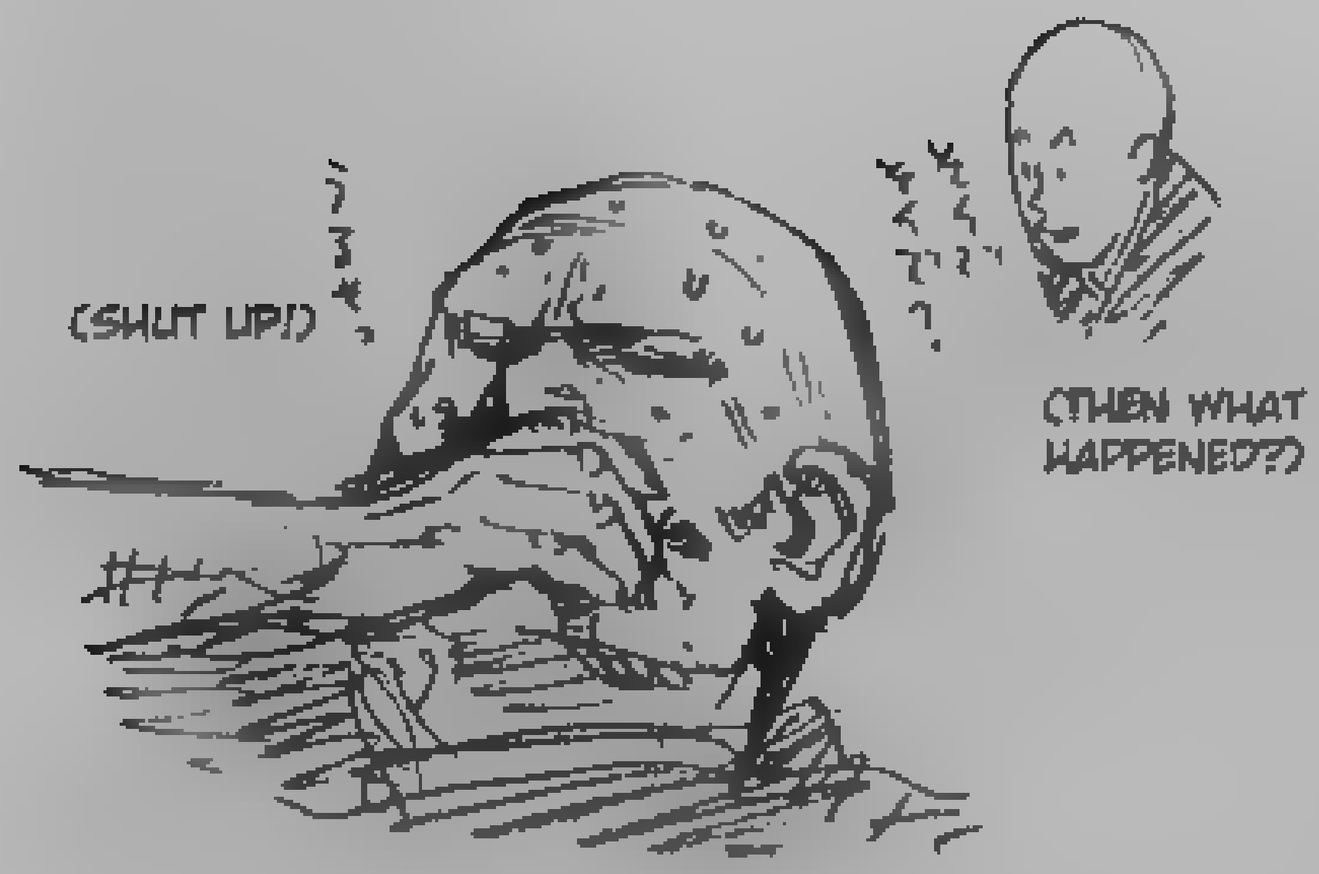
THUMP
THUMP

THUMP
THUMP

...MUSASHI HAD NEVER FACED ANYONE LIKE THIS BEFORE IN HIS LIFE.

THUMP
THUMP

Vagabond


(SHUT UP!)
(THEN WHAT HAPPENED?)

THUMP
THUMP

THUMP

THUMP
THUMP

#43 | Inshun's Spear

THWAK

KWOOSH

KWOOSH

KWOOSH

FWIP

THWAK

YEAH!!

YAH!!

NNGH...

!!

THUD

!!

FWOOSH

THRAK

FWOOM

!!

...

HMM...?

WHUD

ARGH!!

HUF!!

KRICH

TWAK

TNK

WHINK

FWIP

HUP!

KRAK!

THOK

!!

HAH!!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING...?

NNGH...

KRICH

HUF

...

HUF

HUF

YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING LIKE YOU USUALLY DO.

HIS SWORD'S GOT NO POWER BEHIND IT.

HE'S TOO SCARED.

YOUR STROKES ARE SO FEEBLE!

PHEW

...

HMPH

TUGG

FEARLESSNESS... THAT WAS HIS ONLY STRENGTH.

MAYBE HE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A BARBARIAN... AN AMATEUR... DID I OVER-RATE HIM?

...

THUNK

HUD

HUH!?

!?

GASP!

HUF

HUF

FWOM

HUF

FWOM

INSHILIN, WATCH OUT! HE'S GOT A FIST FULL OF SAND!

AW, C'MON, AGON! YOU RUINED IT!

I WANTED TO SEE WHAT HE'D DO WITH IT!!

!

...

MY HANDS WERE GETTING SLIPPERY...

FSHH

THERE! THAT'S BETTER...

FSHH

FSHH

HUH!?

YUP.

FWICH

SO THAT'S WHAT THE SAND WAS FOR...

KRIICH

NNGH!!

TURAK

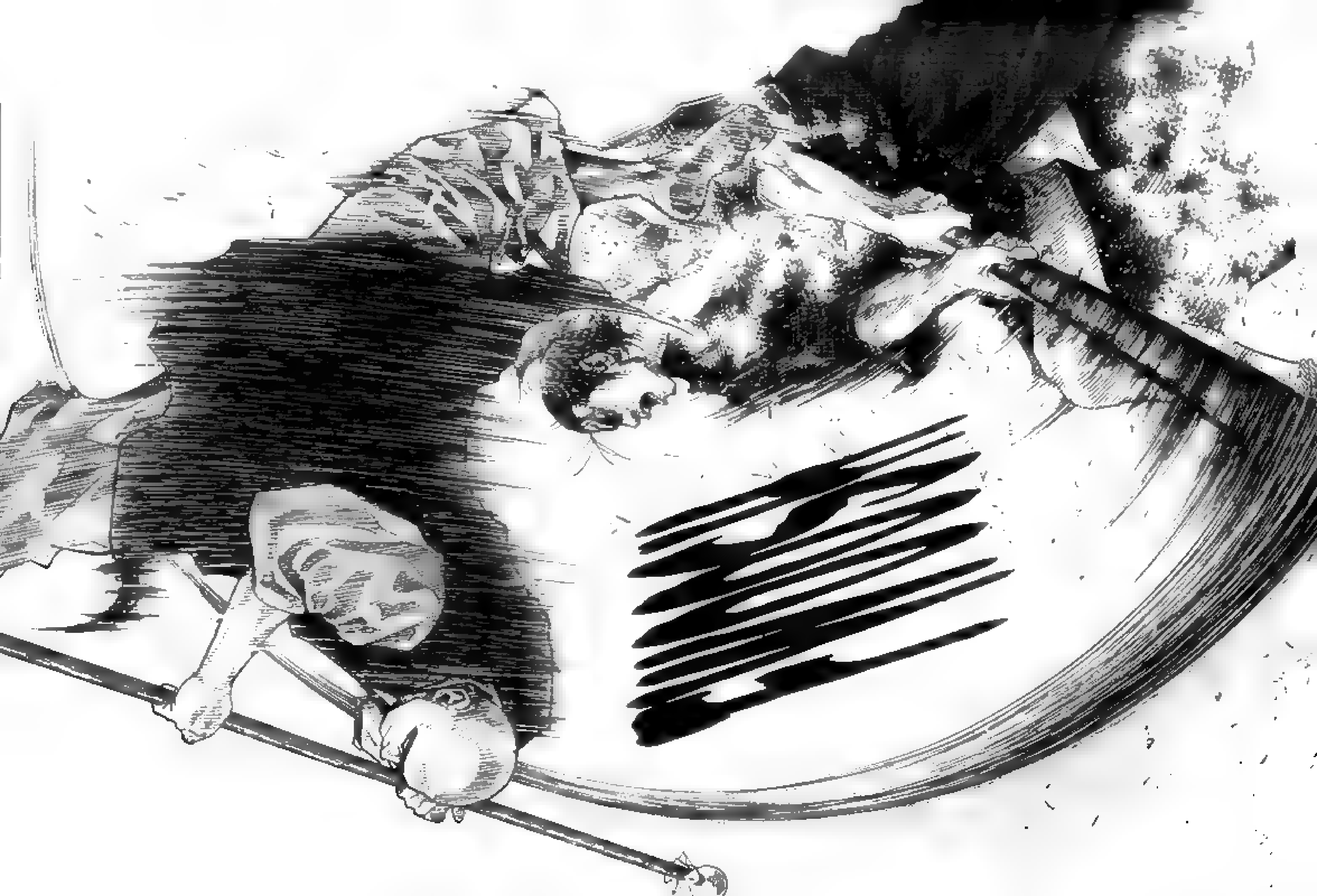
FWOOSH

!!

THAK

FWOOSH

INSHUN!!



TMP

...

...OR AM I WEAK?

AM I STRONG...

I THOUGHT SO.

YOU'VE GOT NO SET FORM.

IT'S LIKE I'M FIGHTING A WILD BEAST!!

WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

MUSASHI.

MADE UP MY OWN STYLE.

I HAVE NONE.

HMPH...

THERE'S SUCH POWER TO HIS STROKE NOW...

SUCH STRENGTH!!

!!

INSHUN...

IF I DEFEAT YOU, *THEN* CAN I CLAIM TO BE STRONG?

YOU'RE ALREADY STRONG.

YOU'VE GOT NO COMPETITION AMONGST ANY OF THE STRAY SAMURAI THAT HAVE BECOME SO COMMON THESE DAYS...

...

...

BUT I DO KNOW THAT YOU'RE REALLY STRONG...

KRICH

I ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW...

...WHETHER I'M STRONG OR WEAK.

IF I BEAT YOU...

...THEN CAN I CLAIM TO BE STRONG?

IF YOU DEFEAT ME, YOU CAN CALL YOURSELF THE MIGHTIEST OF ALL.

SMIRK

THEN LET'S GET STARTED!!

Vagabond

(CHEATER?)

I OVERSLEPT!

HEH HEH. WHAT KIND OF DISCIPLE DOESN'T ACCOMPANY HIS MASTER TO A DUEL?

...WITHOUT ME...

HE WENT TO HŌZŌIN ON HIS OWN...

HIS LAST FIGHT ...!?

SLURP

YOU KNOW, IT MAY BE HIS LAST FIGHT...

#44 Life

MNCH

MY MASTER CAME HERE TO DEFEAT HŌZŌIN INEI!!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN HIS LAST FIGHT!?

HMM...

YOU MEAN THE GREAT INEI?

WHAT!?

HEH HEH HEH. MUSASHI DEFEAT INEI?

THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.

WHY'S HE LOOKING SO SCARY ALL OF A SUDDEN?

HUH...?

THAT'S RIGHT...

INEI HAS RETIRED.

HARUMPH

HE'S NO LONGER AT HŌZOIN.

MASTER!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

INSHUN!

INSHUN, THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZOIN...

HRMPH!

NATURAL BORN GENIUS...

SO INSHUN IS STRONG.

YES, HE IS.

HE'S THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF NATURAL BORN GENIUS!!

ALL WHO FACE INSHUN COME TO THIS CONCLUSION AND INEVITABLY, HIS OPPONENTS BECOME AWARE OF THEIR OWN MEDIOCRITY.

MUSASHI MIGHT BE COMING TO THIS CONCLUSION AT THIS VERY MOMENT.

...!!

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING.

AND DON'T YOU FORGET WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

JOTARO...

...THAT INSHUN IS STRONGER THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, HOZOIN INEI?

...

HRMPH!

ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY THAT INSHUN IS...

THE GREAT INEI IS IN A CLASS ALL BY HIMSELF!

HRMPH

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

THAT BULLY IS ALSO IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN.

...

THE *GREAT* INEI!

HRMPH

A CLASS BY HIM-SELF.

THE *GREAT* INEI!?

HE'S JUST A KID, YET HE'S RISKED HIS LIFE IN BATTLE COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF TIMES...

THE BLOODTHIRST HE PROJECTS...

HIS EYES...

!

RIGHT, OLD MAN?

THEN MY MASTER IS STRONG!!

HOW-EVER...

...THEREIN ALSO LIES THE DANGER.

PERHAPS *THAT'S* THE ONLY ADVANTAGE HE HAS OVER INSHUN.

MOST SWORDSMEN COULDN'T EVEN HOLD A CANDLE TO HIM.

THAT HE IS.

I KNEW IT!!

HUF.

HŌZŌIN TEMPLE!!

HUF.

HUF.

THERE IT IS!

YAAAAAH!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

INSHLIN!

KRICH

THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HŌZŌIN!!

SWAK

SWAK

!!

!!

SWOOSH

AHH!!

THWAK

THWAK

YAH!

YAH!

NNGH!

THWAK

...

GASP!

INSHUN!!

Finish

I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.

I'LL MAKE HIM FIGHT AT *MY* PACE!

MASTER!!

WHAT!?

TP

THUP

OH,

NO!!

TKAK

...!!

THOK

YAH!!

!!

!!

HRAK

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

KRICH

HUF.

HUF.

WHAT AMAZING STRENGTH.

HUF.

HE'S DOMINATING INSHUN!!

UNBELIEVABLE!

WHAT POWER!!

...

HE IS STRONG!!

I KNEW MY MASTER WAS STRONG!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

HUF.

I CAN *SENSE* YOU!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

IT'S AS IF YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR LIFE BEHIND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR ATTACKS.

I CAN PICTURE IT IN MY MIND.

...IN YOUR DEMON-LIKE POWER.

CHIRP

YOU BARE YOUR VERY SOUL...

...AND IT MANIFESTS ITSELF...

CHIRP

CHIRP CHIRP

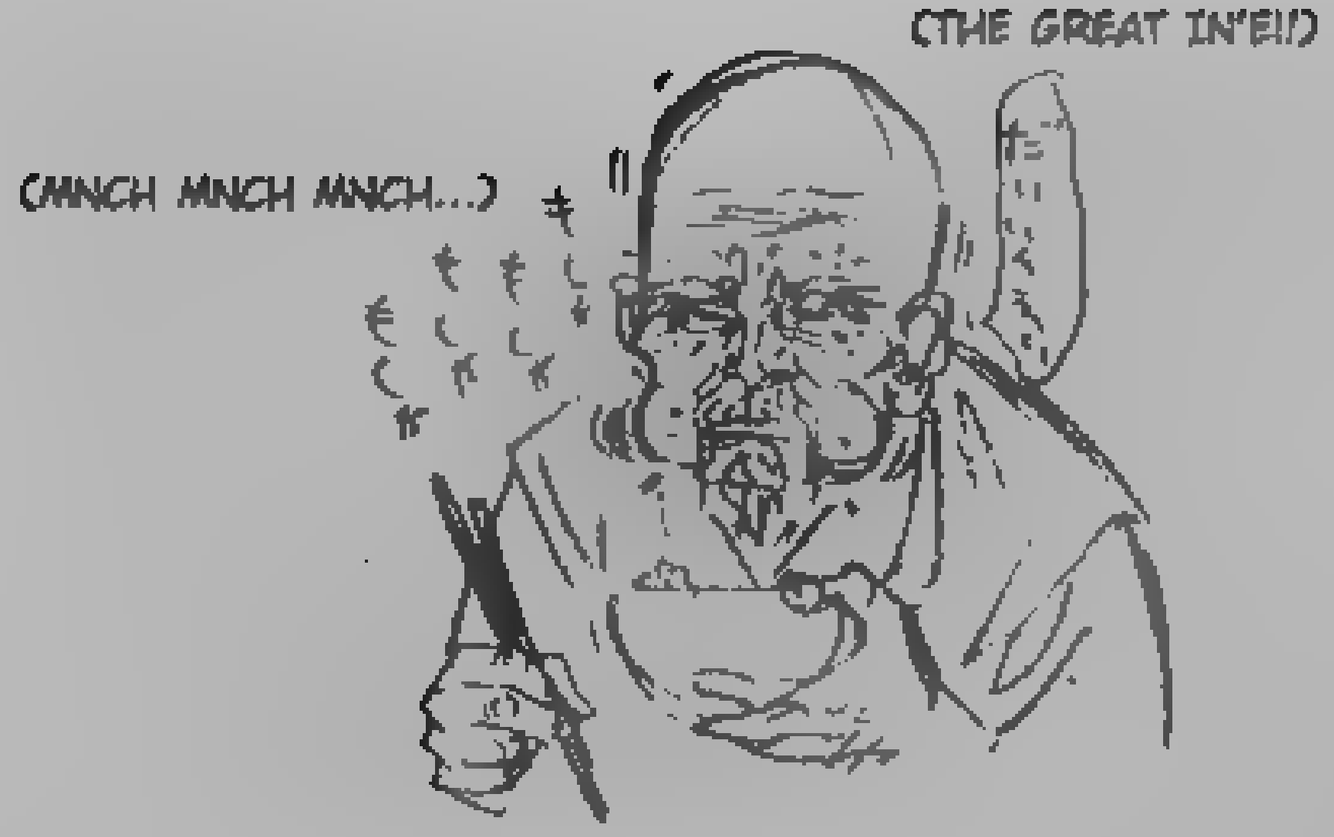
MUSASHI ...

YOU'RE SO YOUNG AND PURE...

IT'S
THE POWER
OF YOUR
LIFE
ITSELF.

WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN SUCH
POWER ENCOUNTERS
SOMEONE SKILLFUL
ENOUGH TO CUT
IT DOWN?

Vagabond


(THE GREAT IN'E!!)
(MNCH MNCH MNCH...)

#45 | Unease

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE ACTUALLY SEEN MY MASTER IN A FIGHT.

I DECIDED TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLE AFTER HEARING HOW HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY TOOK ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...

HE'S TAKING ON THE SECOND GENERATION MASTER OF HOZOIN!

HE COULD EASILY BEAT THOSE OTHER MONKS.

...BUT I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS *THIS* AMAZING!!

AND THAT GUY, TOO!!

...HM...

HE'D WIN AGAINST HIM...

AND RIGHT NOW, MY MASTER'S GOT INSHUN ON THE RUN!!

WHAT'S GION TŌJI DOING HERE!?

WELL, HE MIGHT BE FAMOUS IN KYOTO AS A YOSHIOKA SAMURAI, BUT HE'S NO MATCH AGAINST INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN.

OR MY MASTER!

H-HEY!!

ALRIGHT!!

FWOP

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI IS INVINCIBLE!!

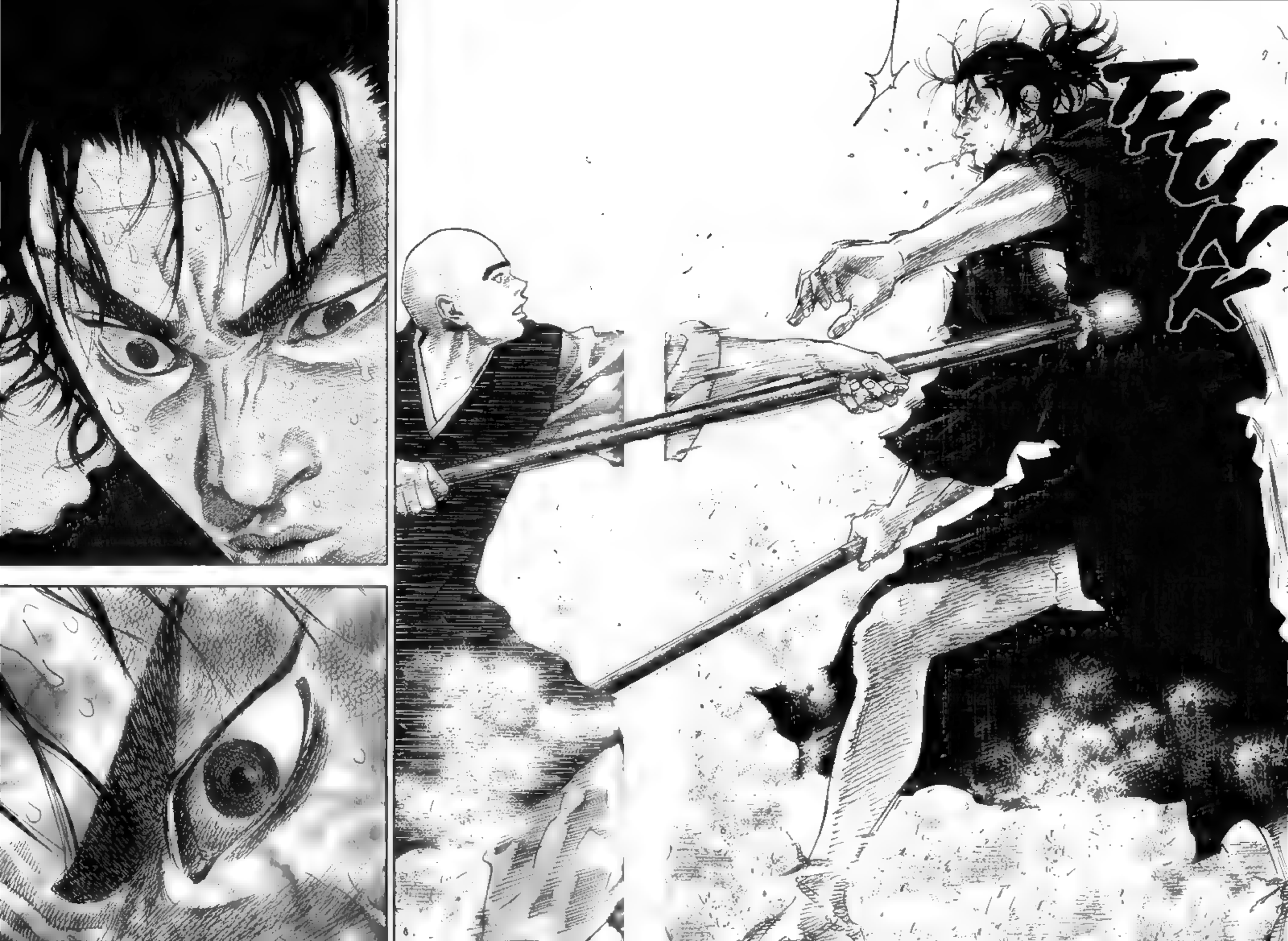
KRICH

HUF.

HUF.

KRICH

FWOOSH


FU
K

HUH!?

ENGAGE

KRICH

AMAZING!!

YOU'RE STILL ON YOUR FEET!

I HAVEN'T EVEN HIT HIM ONCE!

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

HE'S HIT ME FOUR TIMES.

I FEEL LIKE THROWING UP.

DAMN IT!!

TORAK

WHAM

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

!?

!?

HE CAN'T EVEN SEE THE ATTACKS COMING!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

I'VE MANAGED TO FEND OFF YOUR ATTACKS.

GOOD...

NOW IT'S *MY* TURN.

!!

FINISH

FWAK

!!

NO!!

!!

KKUD

NNGH..

FWICH

HAD ENOUGH!?

HMPH!!

FWAK

!!

FWISH

!!

KRICH

...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

STOP DODGING ME, YOU BASTARD!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

AMAZING!!

ON THIS, HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH INSHUN OF HŌZŌIN...

...MIYAMOTO MUSASHI FELT AN OVERWHELMING UNEASE.

AND HE HAD ONLY ONE THING WITH WHICH TO FIGHT IT OFF...

YOU'RE DEAD...

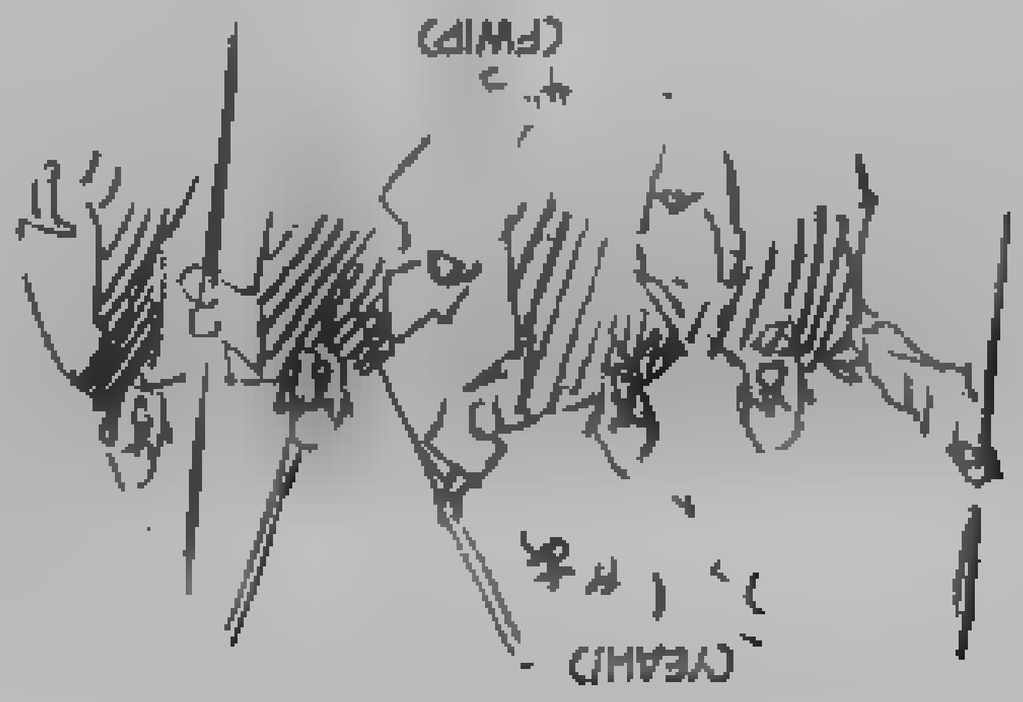
...RAGE.

YOU'RE LEAVING YOURSELF WIDE OPEN!

YOU FOOL!

THUNK

Vagabond


(FWIP)
(YEAH!)

WUD

DAMN IT!!!

HUF

HUF

NO...

KOFF...

HAK...

INSHUN!!

YOU BASTARD!!

HUF!!

KOFF!

HUF!!

HUF!!

HUF!!

HUF!!

HNK!

#46 The Demon Within

THAT'S IT!!

KLAP KLAP

HUF!

HUF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

HOW DARE THEY--?

KOFF!

KOFF!

KLAP KLAP

THIS MATCH IS OVER!!

HUF!

HUF!

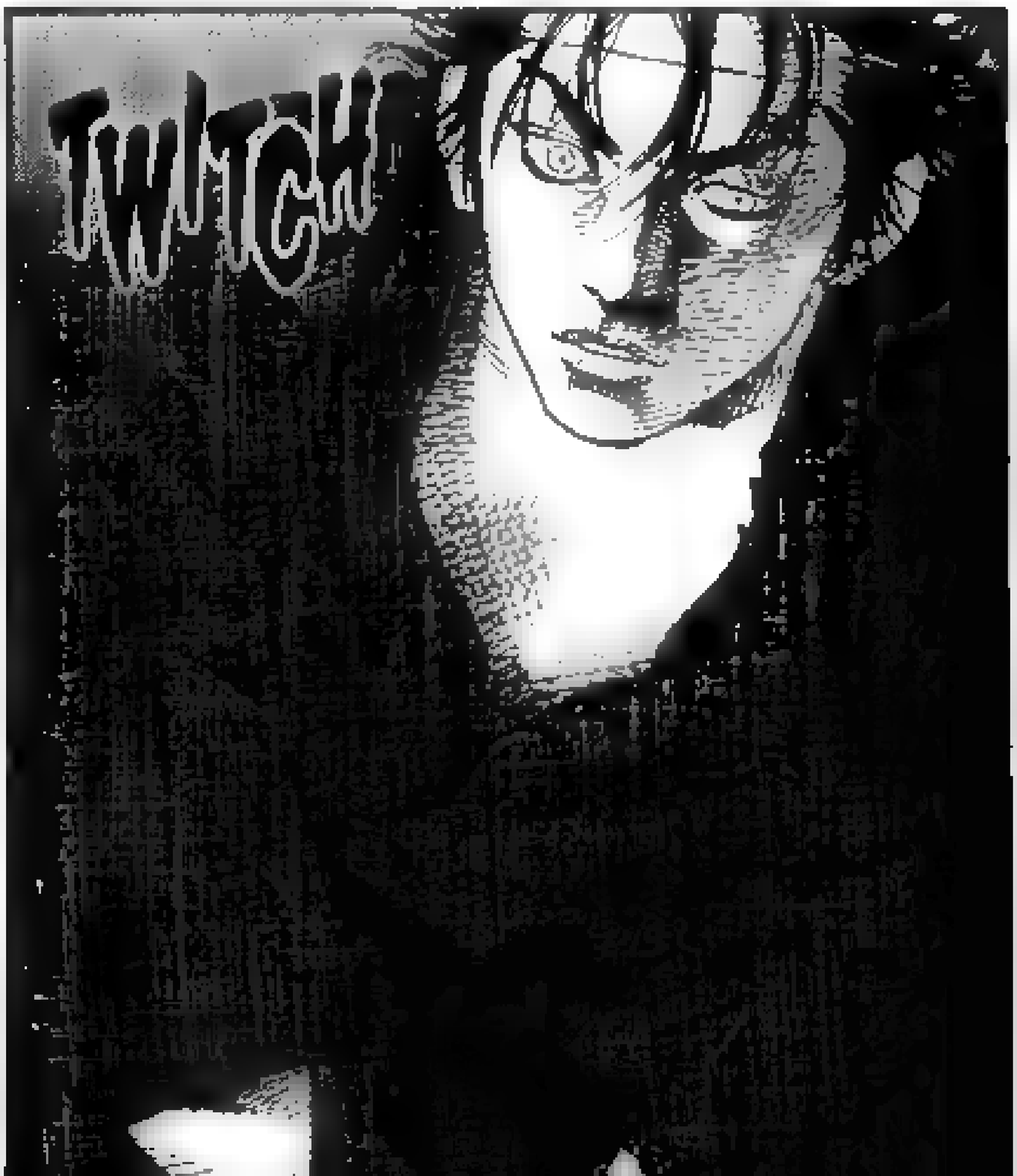
YOU'RE ALL WRONG!!

IT WAS A GREAT BOUT!

HAK!

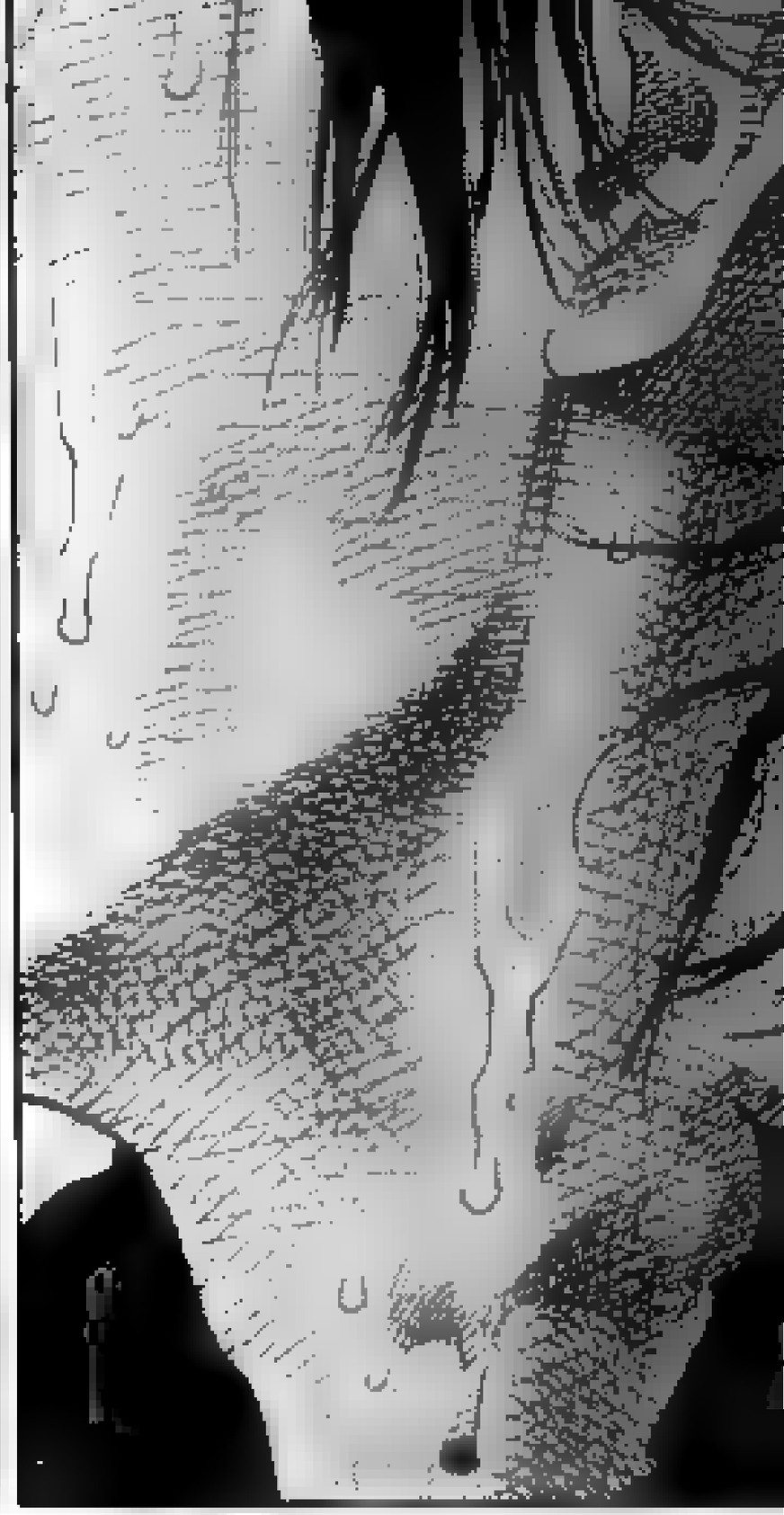
HUF!

HUF!


TWITCH

WHEN HUMANS BATTLE ONE ANOTHER...

A CERTAIN DEMON OBSERVES IN SILENCE, WAITING IN ANTICIPATION.



IT CLINGS TO US...

WAITING TO DEVOUR OUR VERY SOULS....

NEVER MOVING ON ITS OWN...

IT SITS STILL, OBSERVING FROM THE DARKNESS...

PATIENTLY IT WAITS, UNTIL FINALLY THE WEAK SEEK REFUGE WITHIN ITS DARKNESS...

KOFF!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF!

KOFF!!

YOU DON'T THINK YOU'VE ALREADY WON, DO YOU?

KOF.

HUF.

HUF.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CONTINUE YOUR ATTACK...?

HUF.

HUF.

KOF.

HUF.

FWOW

HM?

INSHUN...

ACCEPT YOUR DEFEAT!!

IT'S OVER!!

HE KNOCKED YOU DOWN!!

TWITCH

TWITCH

TWITCH

MASTER ...

HUF!

HUF!

MUSASHI INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS...

...ONCE A FIGHT BEGINS, THERE IS ONE EMOTION...

...THAT MUST NEVER BE GIVEN IN TO.

SINCE THE AGE OF THIRTEEN...

HUF.

HUF.

...HE HAS SEEN THIS EMOTION CRUSH MANY OF HIS OPPONENTS...

MUSASHI KNOWS ONLY TOO WELL HOW THE DEMON "FEAR" CAN MAKE EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF MEN FALL.

FLIP

AARGH!

ARGH!

FWICH

IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN THAT...

!!

...TO TAKE DOWN MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

FWICH

YOU CHEATER!!

YOU DISHONOR-ABLE--

BASTARD!

URGH...

NO!!

KRICH

THRAK

!!

EVEN IF YOU WERE ARMED WITH A REAL SPEAR...!!

URGH...

ZING

!

FWOOSH

YOU STILL DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...

...

NNGH

TRAK

...TO KILL ME!!

FWOOSH

I'M
NOT
GONNA
LOSE.

!!

TOK

HUF.

KRICH

HUF.

HUF.

!!

ARGH...

HUF.
HUF.
YOU ALMOST HAD ME!
HUF.
HUF.
PHEW!
HUF.
HUF.
HAK!!
HAK.
HAK!!
PHEW!
...

I HAVE TO KILL YOU, DON'T I...?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP...

KRICH

SHUFF

I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED A FIGHT LIKE THIS BEFORE.

NO ONE'S BEEN WILLING TO RISK THEIR LIFE TO TRY TO BEAT ME...

NO ONE...

...THIS MATCH...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

...IT'S GOING TO MAKE ME EVEN STRONGER THAN I AM NOW!

I JUST KNOW IT!

KRICH

A BATTLE TO THE DEATH...

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU

DO NOT BEAR ME ANY ILL WILL.

KRUCH

Vagabond

(LURCH...)
(THE BUG CALLED "FEAR"...)

STRONGER...

THIS MATCH WILL MAKE ME STRONGER!

...I WANT TO PUT MY LIFE BEHIND MY SPEAR.

JUST LIKE MUSASHI IS PUTTING HIS ENTIRE BEING INTO HIS SWORD...

IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

IF I CAN TAKE IT THAT FAR...

THEN EVEN DEVILS AND DEMONS WILL FALL BEFORE ME!!

#47 Fear

GASP!

!!

YAHHH!!

!!
THOR

MASTER!

...

URR...

URGH...

YAHH!

KRICH

!!

FWISH

HUF!

HUF!

HUF!

HUF!

HUF!

ONE BLOW'S USUALLY ENOUGH TO PUT YOU IN BED FOR DAYS.

RIGHT?

YEAH!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

GULP...

MUSASHI'S STILL ON HIS FEET AFTER TAKING ALL OF INSHUN'S BLOWS...!!

LIKE A CAT PLAYING WITH A MOUSE!?

YEAH, THAT'S IT!

MAYBE HE'S JUST RESTRAINING HIMSELF, JUST TOYING WITH HIM...

INSHUN'S UP TO SOMETHING...

...BUT HE LOOKS SO HAPPY!!

LOOK!

HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS FIERCE FIGHT...

YOU'RE ALL A DISGRACE TO HOZOIN.

FWISH

ARGH!!

LOOK AT THIS MAN!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HAK.

UNDER-ESTIMATE HIM...

...AND YOU'LL BE KILLED IN AN INSTANT!!

FWISH

MUSASHI SOMEHOW MANAGES TO JUST BARELY AVOID FATAL BLOWS!!

EVEN AGAINST INSHUN!!

HUF.

THIS IS THE PURE INSTINCT...

HUF.

HAK!!

HUF.

HAK!!

...OF A NATURAL BORN FIGHTER!!

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
KRICH
LIKE A STARVING BEAST LURKING DEEP IN THE FOREST...
...WITH STRENGTH AND DETERMIN-ATION...
...SO INTENSE AND FIERCE...
KRICH
KRICH
HUF.
HUF.
THAT'S HOW I WANT TO BE.
HE'S GONNA BE KILLED.
ATTACK!!
HUF.
HUF.
HUF.
MY MASTER'S GOING TO BE KILLED.
SOME-ONE HELP.
COME ON, ATTACK!!!

HE'S GONE!!

HUH!? WHERE DID GION TŌJI GO?

GION TŌJI, PLEASE HELP HIM!

THAT BASTARD ESCAPED!!

MAYBE HE GOT TIRED OF WAITING.

HE LEFT A SHORT WHILE AGO.

SNIFF.

SNIFF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

IT'S... UH...TOO LATE.

LET'S GO AFTER HIM.

YEAH.

KRICH

KRICH

...THEY CLEARLY REFLECT HIS FEAR AND UNEASE.

MIYAMOTO'S ATTACKS OF RAGE AND ANGER...

KRICH

IT'S AS IF INSHUN [redacted] EMBRACING HIS OPPONENT FOR OFFERING SUCH A GREAT CHALLENGE...

THERE'S NEITHER ANGER NOR HATRED IN INSHUN'S ATTACKS.

IN FACT, HIS ATTACKS ALMOST SEEM FRIENDLY.

SLISH

INSHLIN...

...

HE'S IN A DIFFERENT REALM

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING BEYOND THIS FIGHT?

ATTACK!!

ATTACK!!

HUFF!!

ATTACK!!

HUFF!!

HUFF!!

SLISH

JUST KEEP ATTACKING!

HAK.

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

HAK.

HAK.

THUMP THUMP

HUF.

HUF.

THUMP THUMP

URGH..

NNGH..

FWOM

ARGH..

NO!!

C'MON! LET'S KEEP GOING!

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

CAN'T MOVE MY RIGHT ARM...

HE'S TOO FAR.

LONG...

I CAN'T REACH HIM.

SHORT

BLEEDING... WON'T STOP!

IT'S DARK...

#18

Fear II

HE'S GOING TO KILL ME.

HUF!!

HUF.

HUF!!

HUFF!!

HUF.

MUSASHI

KRICH

!!

HE'S DEAD...

KLAK

ТИШОН

TUGG

!!

!!

THONK

KRRSH

PLISH

FWISS
!!
KRICH

FWOOSH

!!

THOK

!!!

WHUD

!!

HAKK

IT'S OVER!

YOUR TIME'S COME!!

ゴッ

AIEEE!

SWISH

HUF!

SWINCH

AIEEE!

KRRCH

ARGH!

HUF!

HUF!

HUF!

HUF.

HUF.

...

HUF.

YAAHH!!

FWIP

KRAKK

YAH!

SWAP

!!

HUF.

NNGH...

KOF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUU...

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

KOF.

H.F.

H.F.

H.F.

H.F.

HUF.

HUF.

HUF.

#49|Fear III

FIPP.

DIE!

THWAK

HUF.

HUF.

HAH.

YES!!

KEEP COMING AT ME!!

FWOOSH

YAHHH!

!!

KRICH

UNGH!

GASP!

FWOOSH

!!

HMPH...

WH-
WHAT
STRENGTH!

AND
HE CAN
BARELY
STAND!!

USING
HIS *LEFT*
ARM...

FWOOSH

ARGH!

FWOOSH

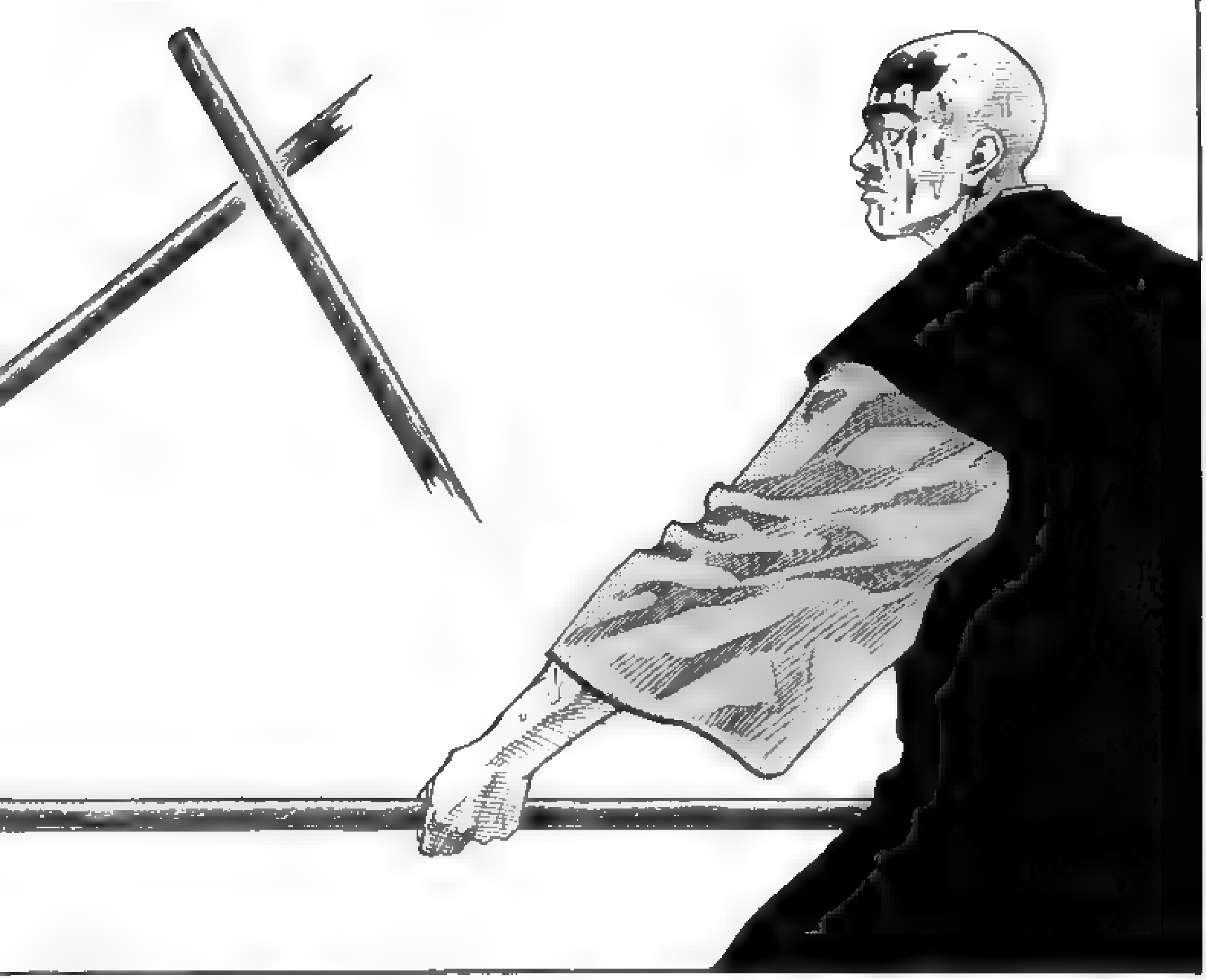
HIS BLOOD THIRST IS BEYOND BELIEF.

FWOOSH

I UNDER-STAND NOW...

KRI-CH

ONE OF US HAS TO DIE.



THUNK

!!
GASP!

THE FINAL FLAME...

BE CALM.

STAY IN CONTROL.

Tuke

THIS BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH...

THIS EXPERIENCE WILL MAKE ME INVINCIBLE.

SMASH

RELAX.

FWOOSH

PATIENCE.

DON'T
HESITATE.

AHHHHH!

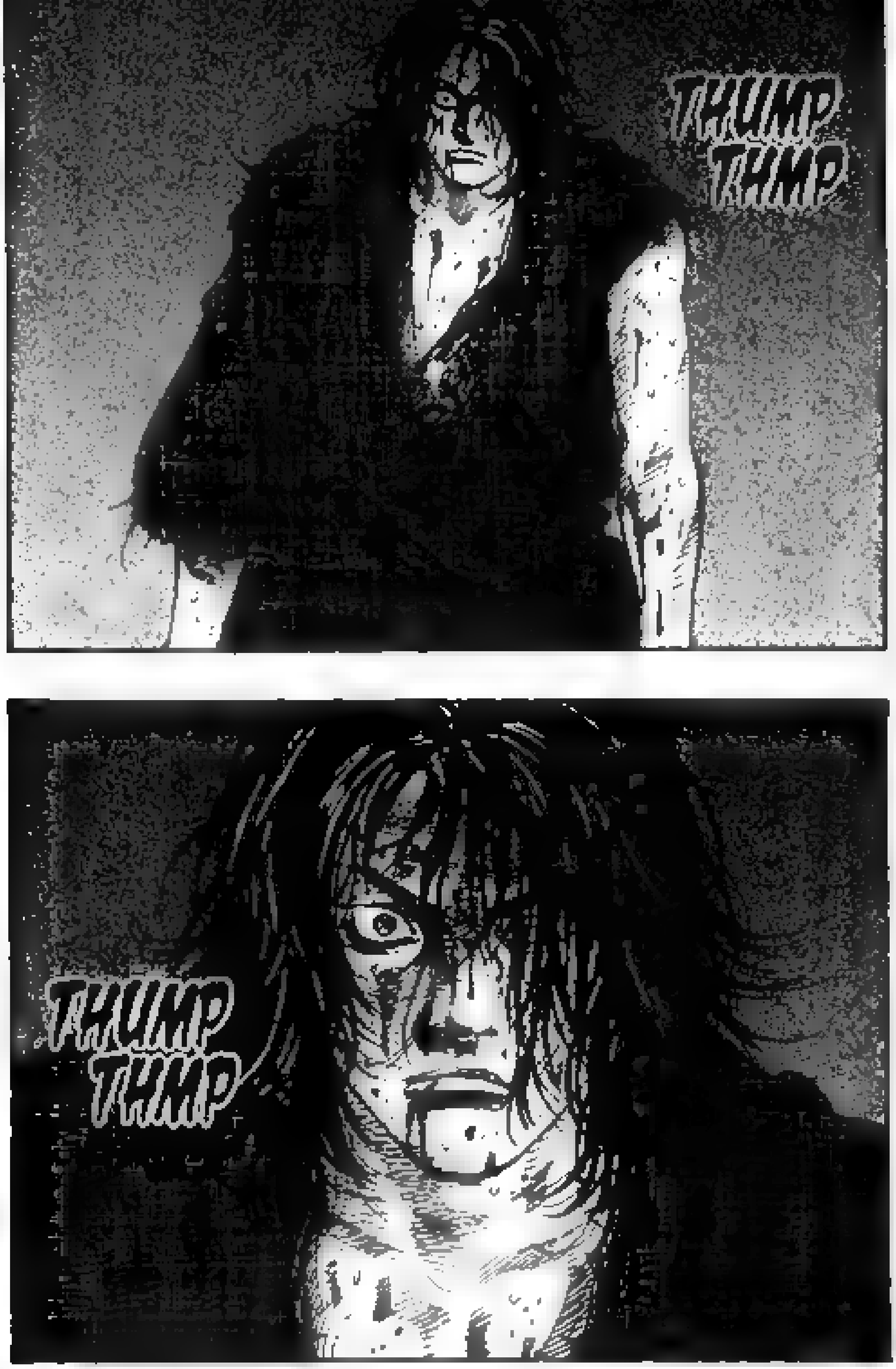
FWOOSH

THUD

KRICH

FWUMP

FWISH


THUMP
THUMP

THUMP

THUMP
THUMP

THANK YOU, MUSASHI...

THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME ABOUT LIFE...

Vagabond

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States ■ *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking ■ expand their spheres ■ control, the *daimyo* were constantly ■ war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successul, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed ■ control approximately one-third ■ all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry ■ the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo*, and by 1590, order was restored ■ Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed ■ the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk ■ the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled ***The Unfettered Mind*** has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears ■ name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key general's ■ the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the daimyo. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** as the plotters of the downfall ■ Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan ■ more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), ■ viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context ■ Inoue's ***Vagabond*** ■ well as ■ Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi ■ numerous occasions.

About *Vagabond* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's ***Vagabond***, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel ***Musashi***, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide ***A Book of Five Rings***, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, ***The Samurai Trilogy***, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***.

About the Author

Vagabond was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga ***Slam Dunk***, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on ***Vagabond***, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue's ***Vagabond*** received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, ***Vagabond*** has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, ***One on One***.

What the critics are saying about *Vagabond*.

"...this reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page. Takehiko Inoue's fine line art, much more detailed for the norm for Japanese manga, is a real treat, while the storyline captivates."

—Cliff Biggers, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

"Takehiko Inoue's vibrant postmodern spin on the (samurai) genre is topnotch in every respect."

—S.A. Bennett, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

"This beautifully drawn series has incredible action, a hint of romance, and a strong core of Japanese history...this book now has the possibility of taking off like a rocket with the American audience."

—Troy Brownfield, *Shotgun Reviews*

"Inoue's artwork is flat-out gorgeous, whether it's in the brief color sections or in black and white. There is a stunning amount of detail in the backgrounds and in the character designs, and it's clear that there has been a lot of research into the costumes, weapons and settings of the era."

—Randy Lander, *TheFourthRail.com*

"It is a masterwork in story and art. In no time you are drawn into the characters, first by the skillful art and then by the story. I found Takehiko's art most appealing and his storytelling ability superb."

—David LeBlanc, *Comic Book Net Electronic Magazine*

"I was entranced within pages of reading *Vagabond*; Inoue's adaptation of Yoshikawa's *Musashi* pulls you right into the story and doesn't let you go."

—Greg McElhatton, *icomics.com*

"What makes *Vagabond* stand out, and makes this something more than just a retelling of Musashi's life is Inoue's feel for characters, breathing life into figures who lived in a world so long ago and far away."

—Matt Brady, *Newsarama*

"Inoue masterfully portrays the brutality of *Vagabond's* setting and the interaction of the characters...Inoue can surprise and even shock the reader with the turns his story and their lives can take. Combined with often breathtaking art, this makes for an extremely satisfying comics experience." —Tony Isabella, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"I think this manga has something for everyone. A MUST READ!"

—Phoenix, *MangaManiacs.org*

"An excellent manga, presented with noticeable care... If you're a fan of Japanese history, you need this in your library. It's that good."

—Patrick King, *animefringe.com*

This is the LAST page of this comic!

Vagabond has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format–presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, ***Vagabond*** is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy ***Vagabond***, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order–surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of ***Vagabond***, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.